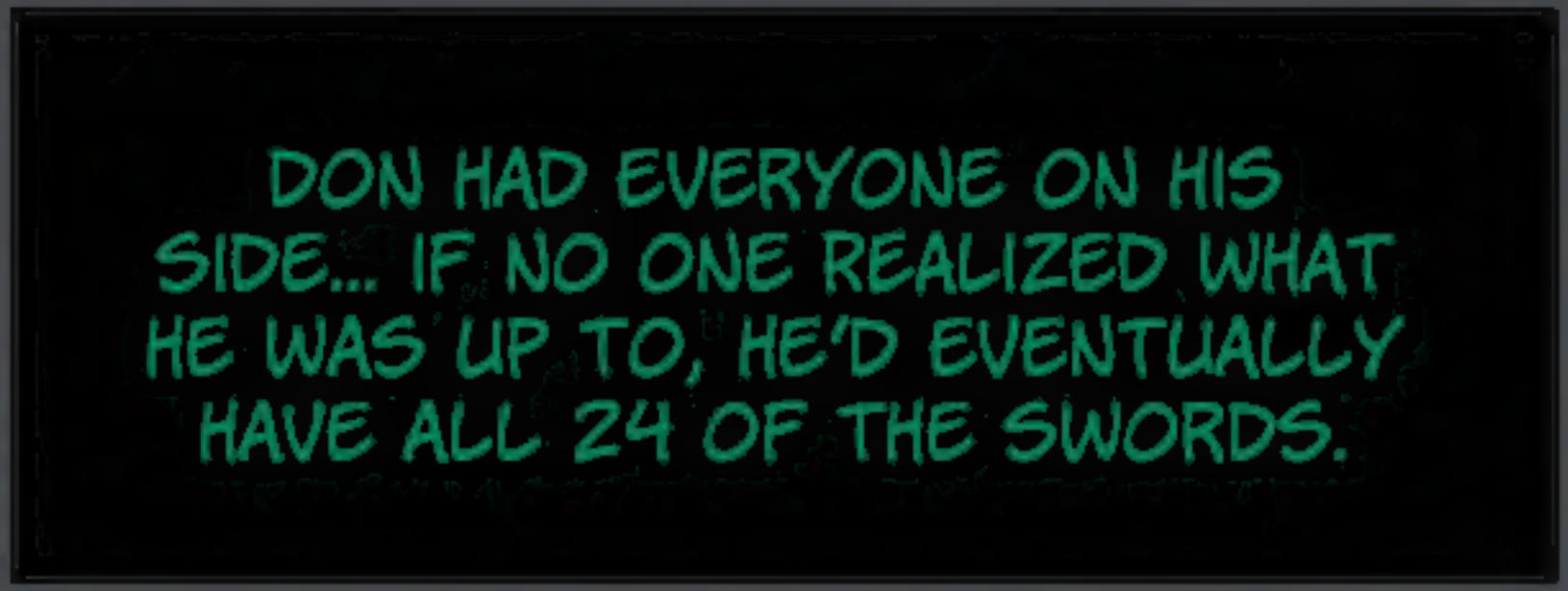
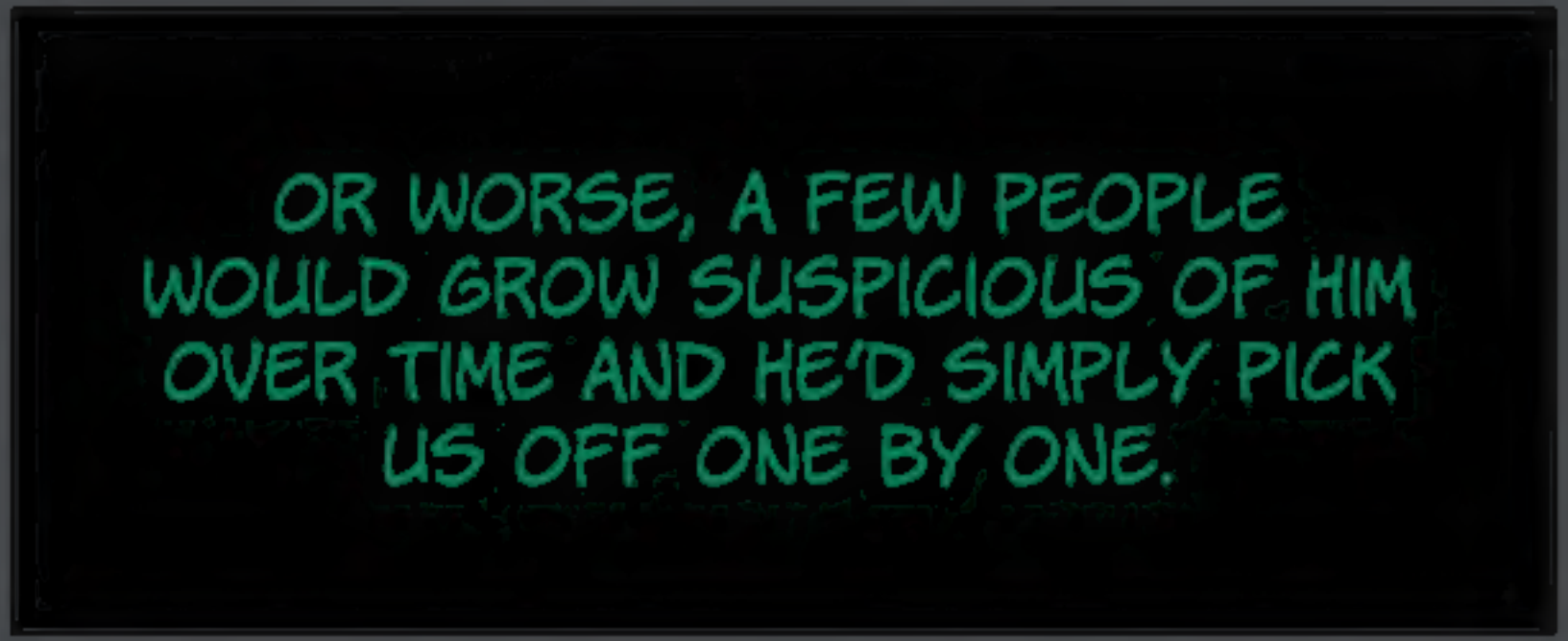

DON HAD EVERYONE ON HIS SIDE... IF NO ONE REALIZED WHAT HE WAS UP TO, HE'D EVENTUALLY HAVE ALL 24 OF THE SWORDS.


OR WORSE, A FEW PEOPLE
WOULD GROW SUSPICIOUS OF HIM
OVER TIME AND HE'D SIMPLY PICK
US OFF ONE BY ONE.

I HAD TO FIND A WAY TO EXPOSE HIM IN FRONT OF A GROUP BIG AND POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STAND UP TO HIM...

SCOUT IDENTIFIED SEVERAL ROUTES TO THE BOSS' LAIR...
BUT I THINK THE BEST STRATEGY IS TO APPROACH THE BOSS HEAD ON.

IT'LL ATTACK US AS SOON AS WE'RE WITHIN 500 METERS, BUT WITH THE MOUNTS KODYA HAS TAMED, WE'LL BE ABLE TO CROSS THAT DISTANCE QUICKER.

AND DON WILL USE HIS ABILITY TO NEUTRALIZE MOST OF THE DANGER.

IT'S MORE AGRESSIVE THAN I'D USUALLY LIKE, BUT WE'LL HAVE MORE TIME AND RESOURCES TO SPEND IN THE FIGHT.

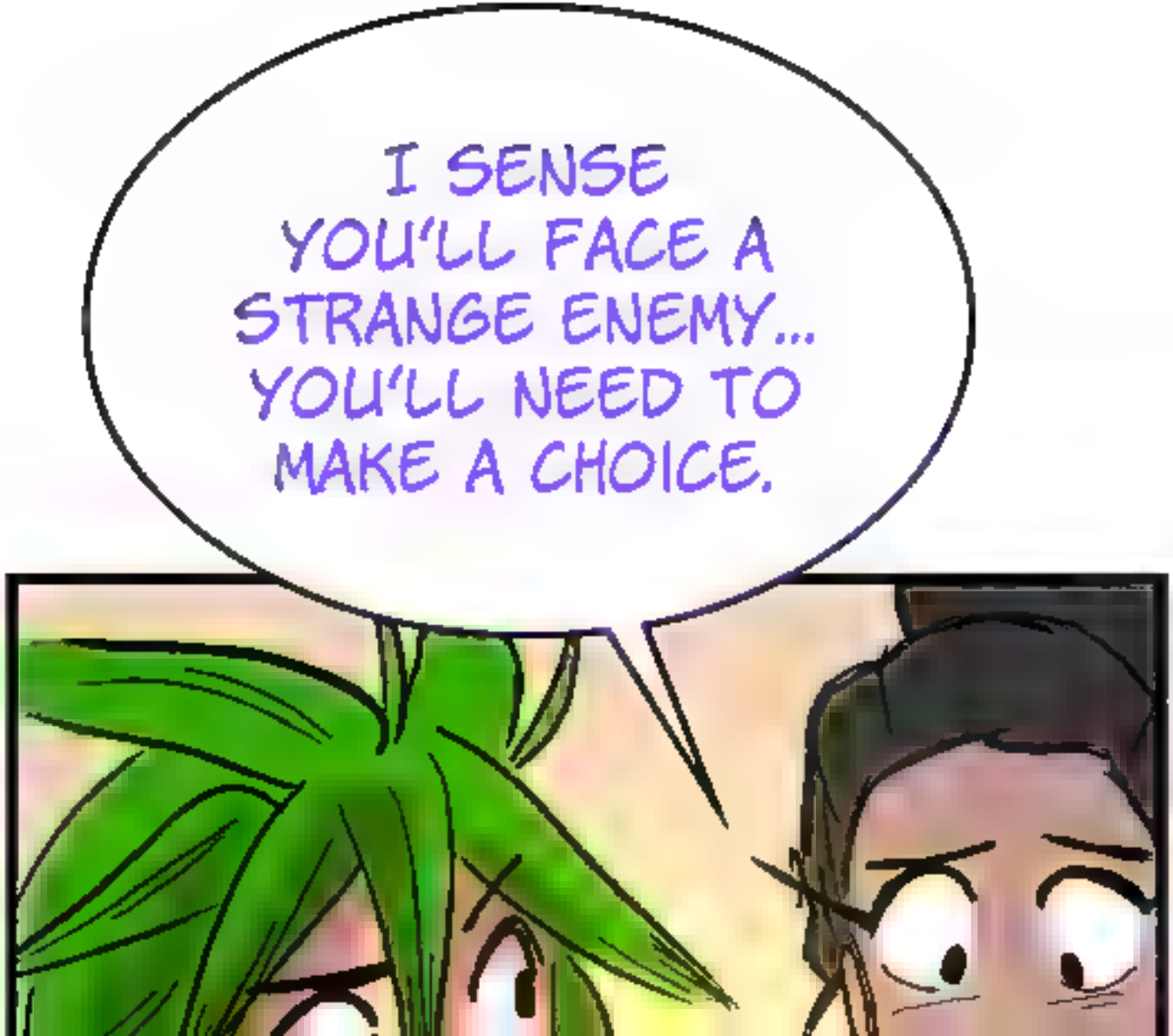
SO THAT'S THE PLAN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, NEPHTHYS? WILL IT WORK?
TAP

TAP
HMM...

YES,
I THINK
IT WILL.
BUT...
I STILL
HAVE A BAD
FEELING...

REALLY? ABOUT WHICH PART?

NO, NO, IT'S NOT THE PLAN...
IT'S ABOUT YOU!


I SENSE YOU'LL FACE A STRANGE ENEMY... YOU'LL NEED TO MAKE A CHOICE.

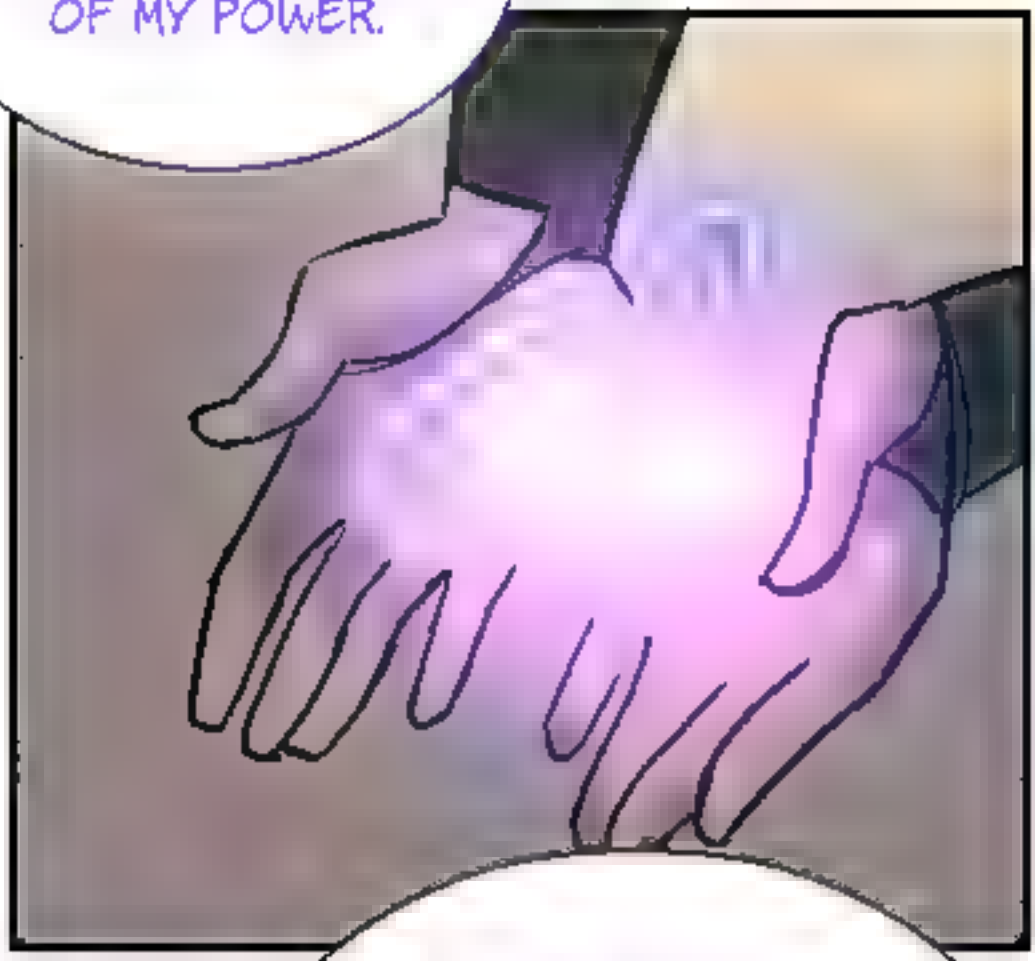
AND NO MATTER WHAT YOU CHOOSE, NOTHING WILL BE THE SAME AGAIN.

MAYBE IT'S KODY'S WORRYING RUBBING OFF ON ME... BUT PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
...KODYA'S WORRIED?

OOPS...
I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID ANYTHING...

HERE,
I WANT TO
GIVE YOU
THIS.

I FILLED THIS *SHARE STONE* WITH A DAY'S WORTH OF MY POWER.

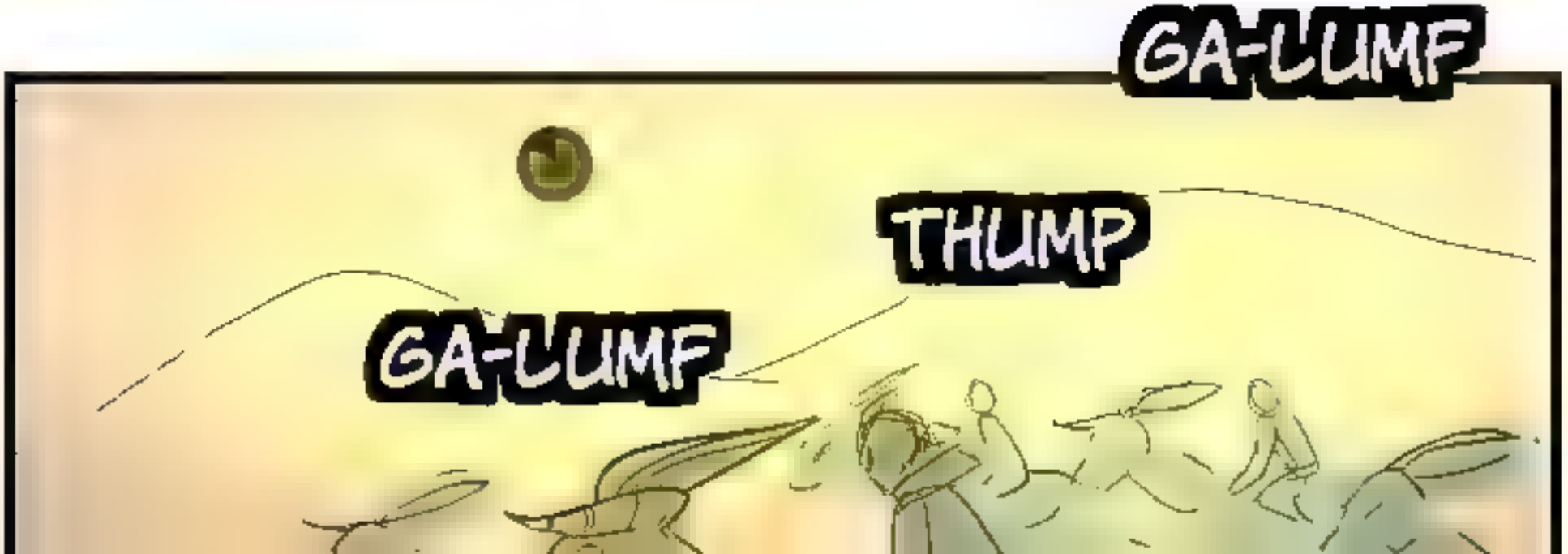


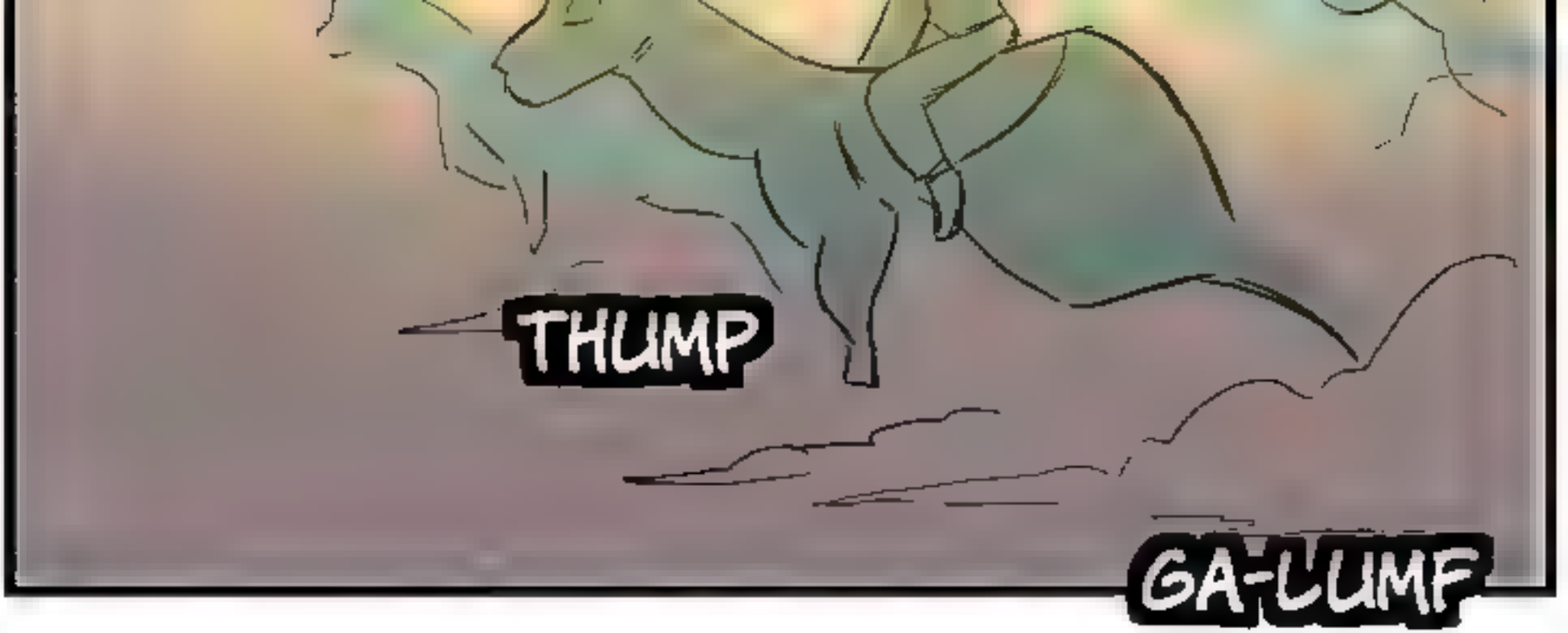
THE HEALING EFFECT ISN'T AS POTENT AS A HEART BEET, BUT YOU CAN EQUIP IT IF YOU NEED A LITTLE CLAIR-VOYANCE AT SOME POINT.

STORY/ART: TOONIMATED

CHAPTER 105

" SET ME OFF "


GA-LUMF
THUMP
GA-LUMF



HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE WE'VE SEEN A SHADOW?

OR MAYBE THEY'VE ALREADY INFILTRATED OUR GROUP... AND THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR A CHANCE TO STRIKE.

I THINK WE'D NOTICE IF SOMEONE WERE A SHADOW.

I'M SAYING SOMEONE COULD BE *HELPING* THEM.

THAT'S CRAZY! WHO WOULD HELP A SHADOW?

WELL
I HEARD THAT
GYRUS LEARNED
HOW TO TALK TO
THEM.

I GUESS HE HAS BEEN A LITTLE OFF LATELY...

RUMOR HAS IT HE BECAME OBSESSED WITH THE SHADOWS AFTER THAT TIME HE WENT MISSING.

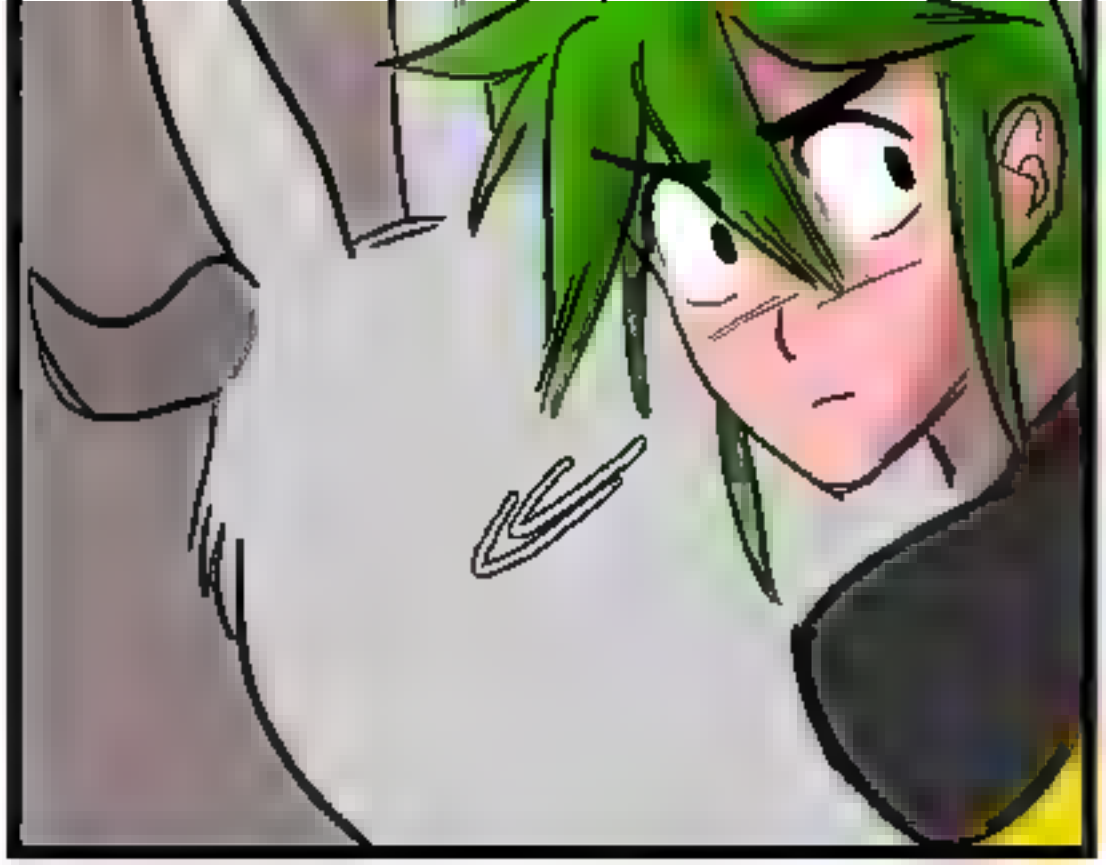
THAT'S PROBABLY WHEN THEY GOT TO HIM!

TROT
TROT
EVERYTHING OKAY UP HERE?
TROT
TROT

EVERYTHING'S GREAT!
HA HA, YEP, GREAT!
TROT
TROT

TROT
TROT

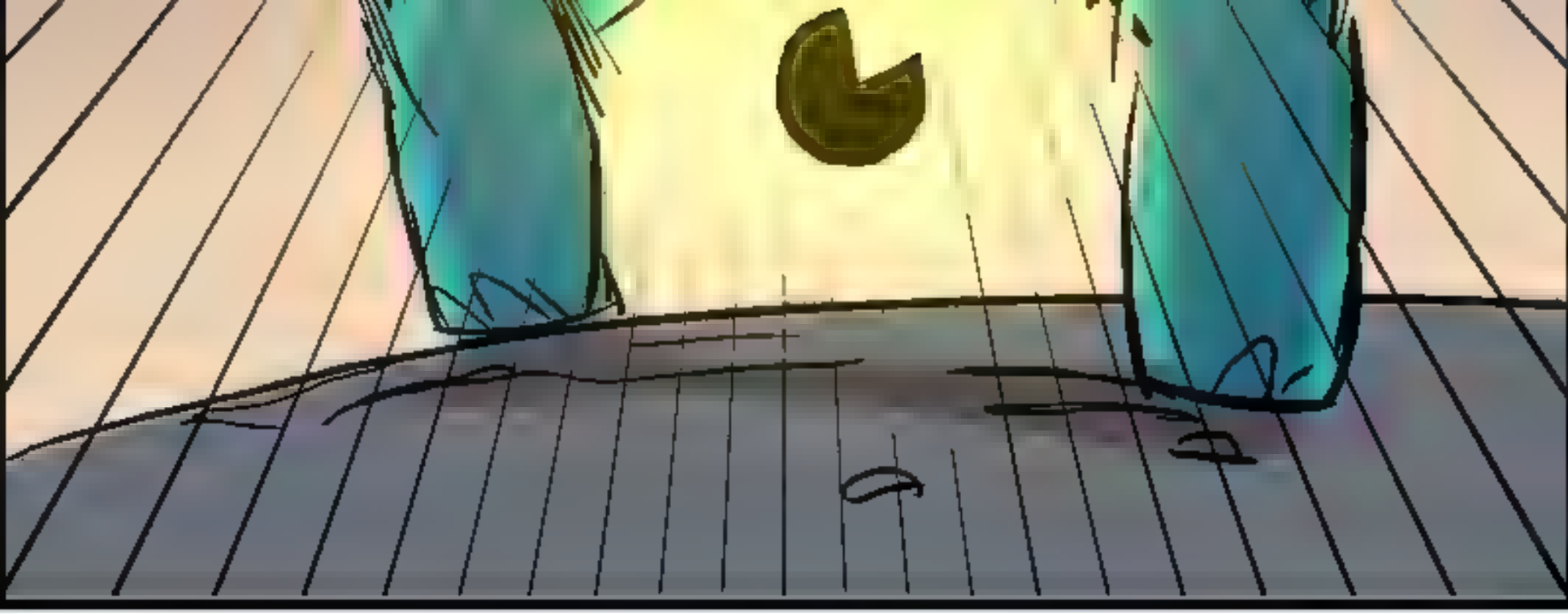
THINK HE HEARD US?
LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE!
TROT
TROT
TROT
TROT

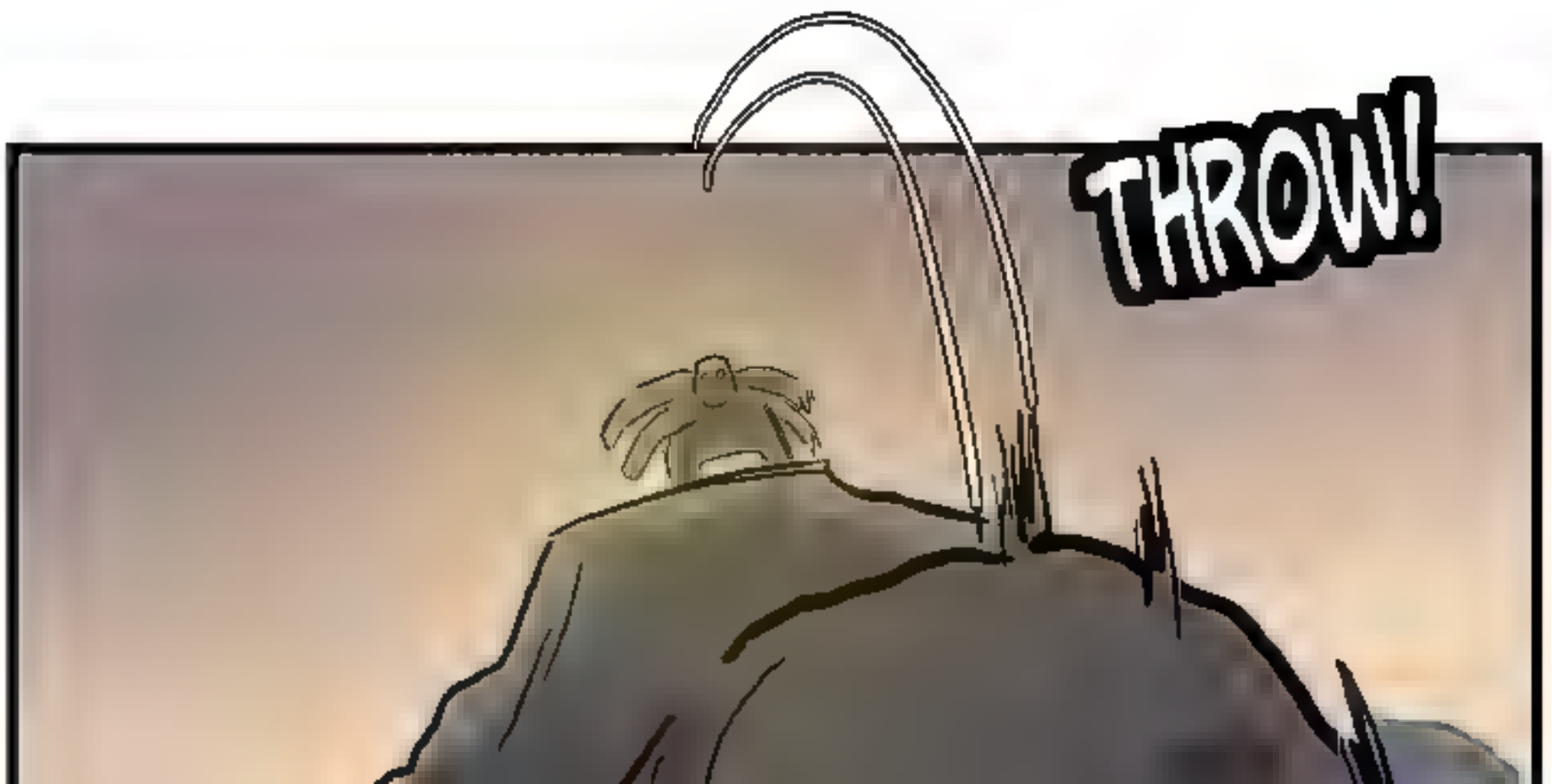


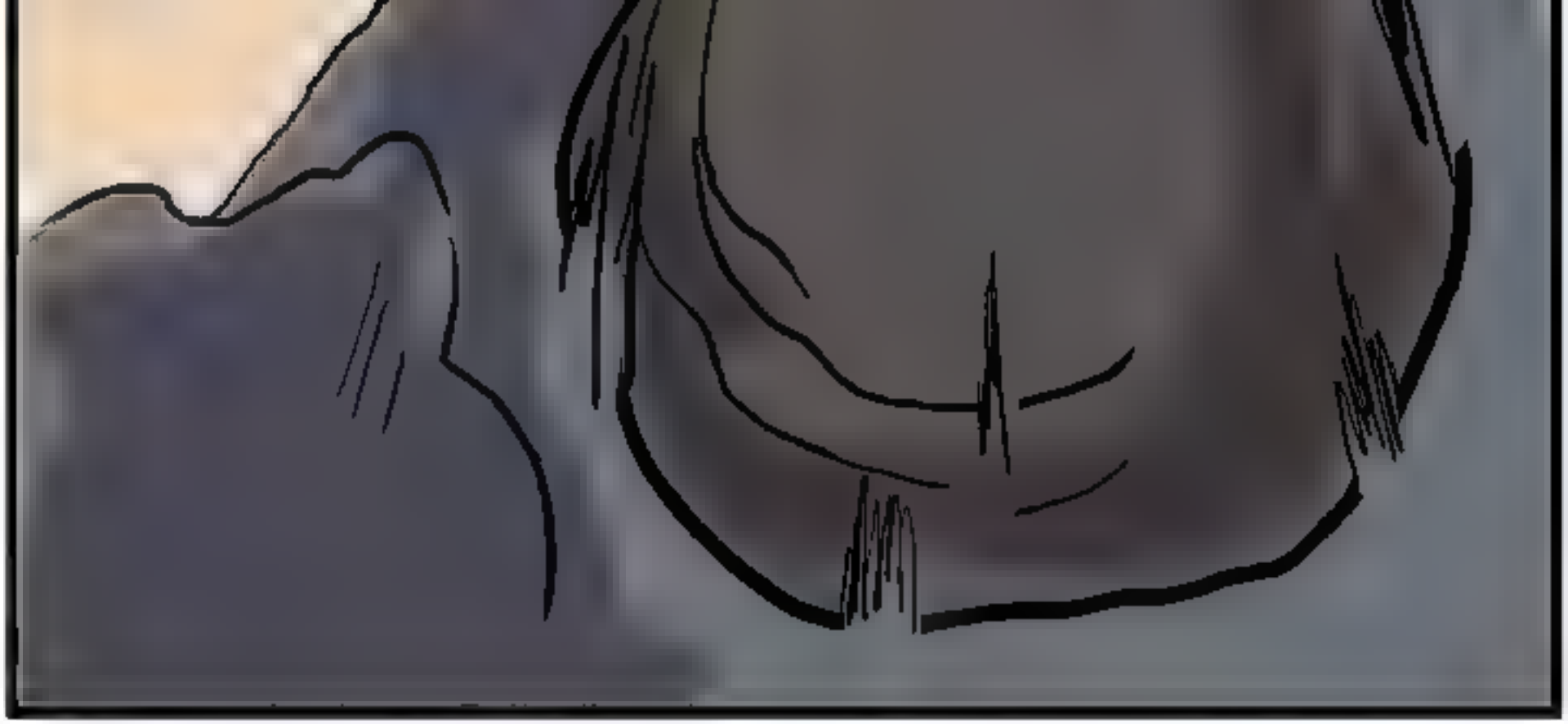
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER

ARE THEY ALL THINKING THE SAME THING?

ROAR!



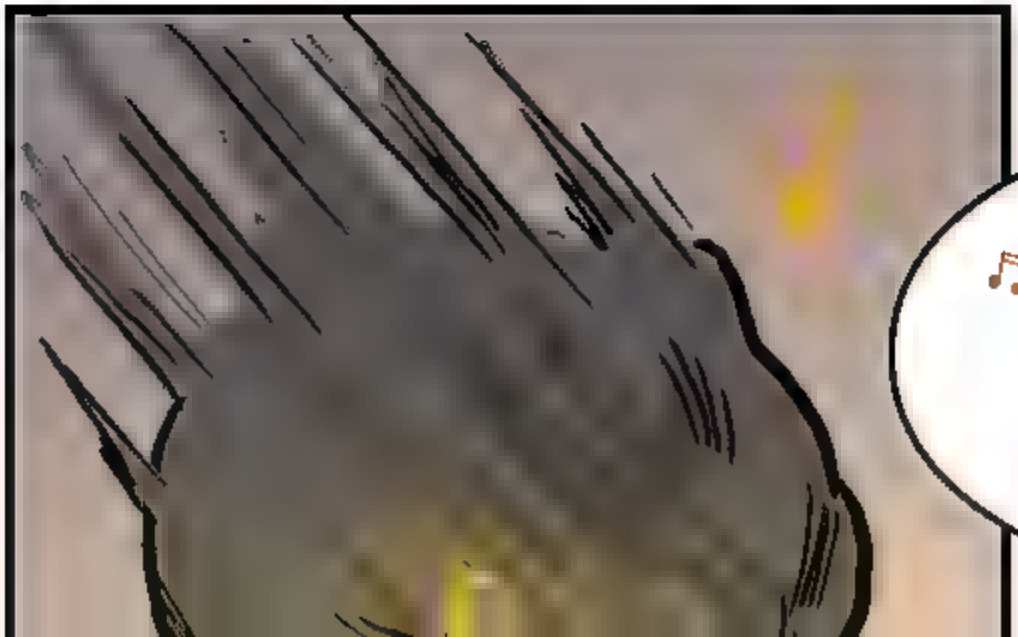

THROW!



STRUM!
♫ HMM
MMM HM...
HM-M-M... ♫

♫ THERE WAS NOTHING TO FEAR... ♫

♫ AS WE CROSSED THE PLAINS... ♫



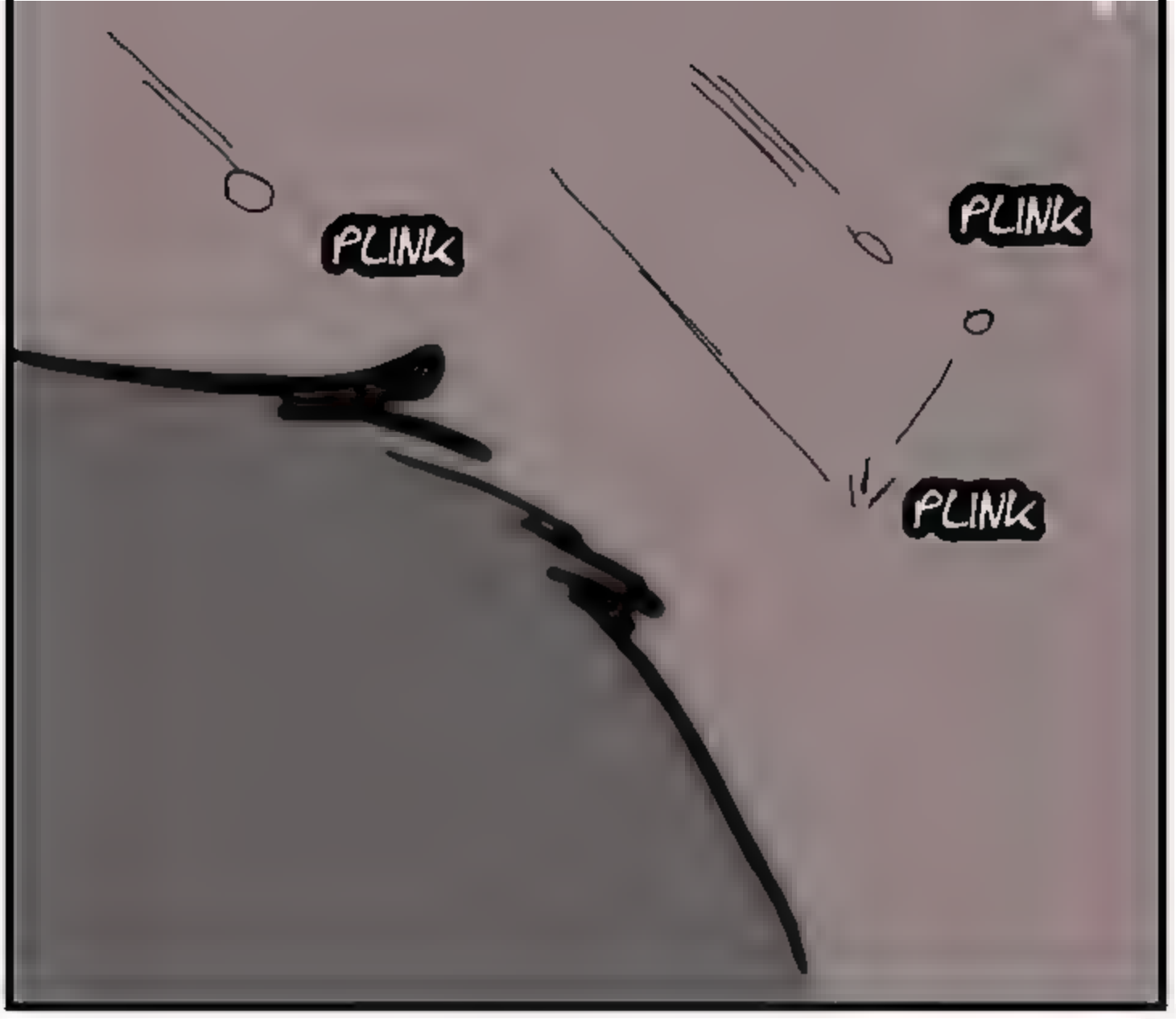
♫ FOR THE VOLLEY OF STONE... ♫

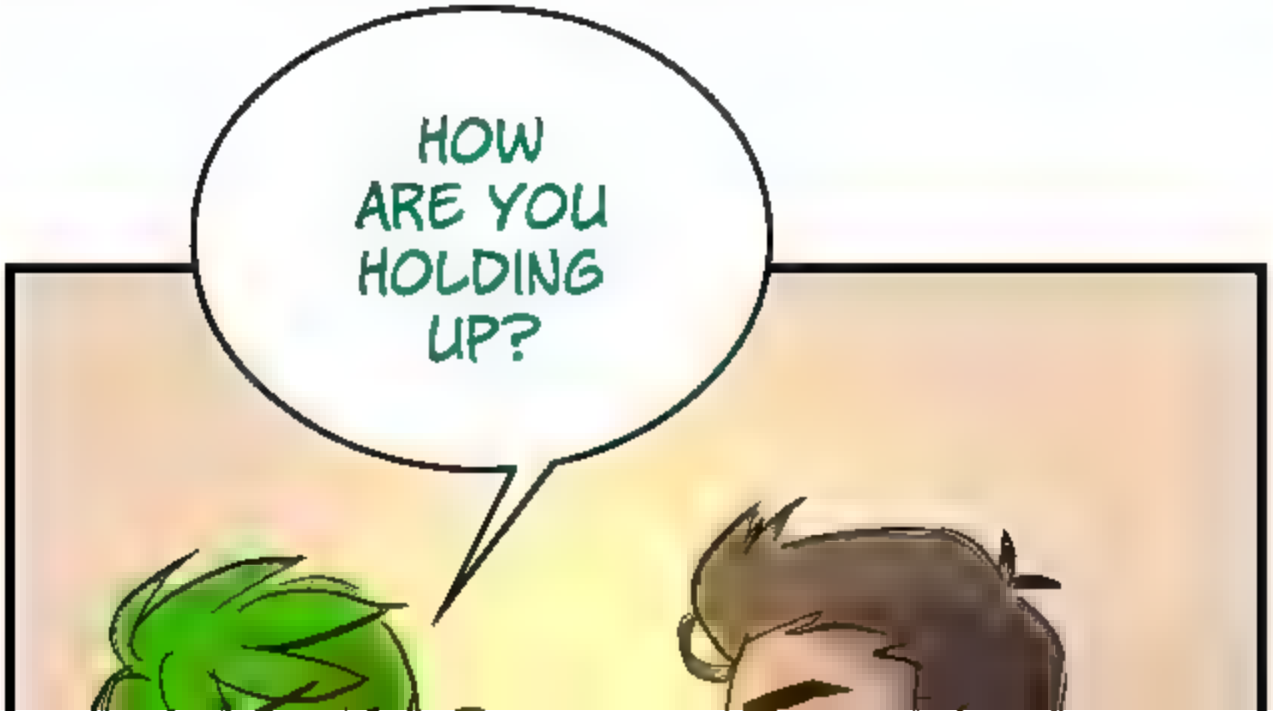
♫ WAS NOTHING BUT GRAINS. ♫

♫ MERE SAND IN THE WIND... ♫
P.SHUUU

SHUUU
♫ RAINED DOWN SOFT AND DRY. ♫

♫ HMM
HM HMM MM
MM... ♫


PLINK
PLINK
PLINK


HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?

BIEN, AMIGO. I SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH MANA TO REACH THE MOUNTAIN.
NO ONE'S BEEN CRUSHED BY A ROCK YET, I HOPE?

NO, EVERYONE'S IN GOOD SHAPE...

THERE ARE SOME STRANGE RUMORS GOING AROUND, THOUGH...

THEY'RE STARTING TO QUESTION MY LOYALTY.

PERHAPS IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER...

I'D THINK YOU WERE UNTRUST--WORTHY TOO.

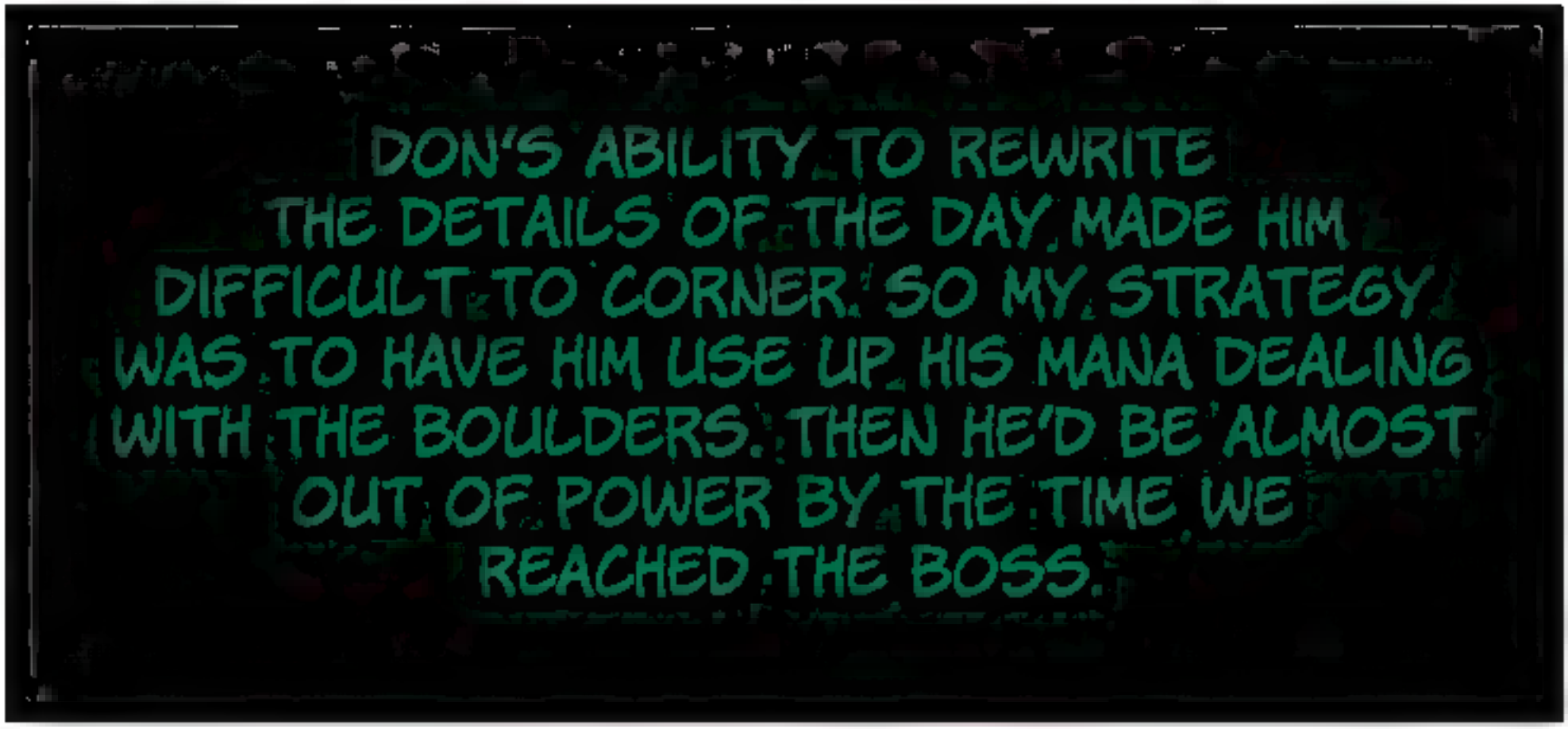
ALL THOSE SECRET PROJECTS AND SOLO TRIPS TO THE TEMPLE...?

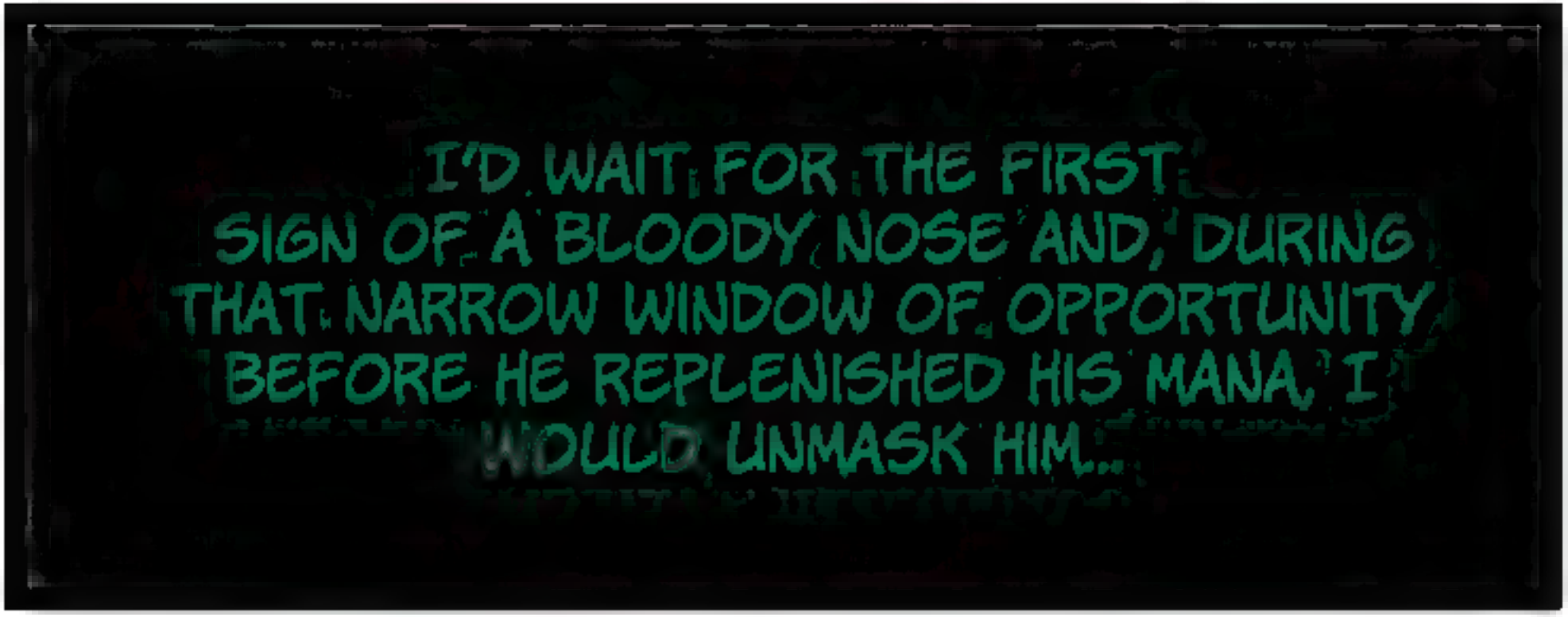
BE CAREFUL, AMIGO.

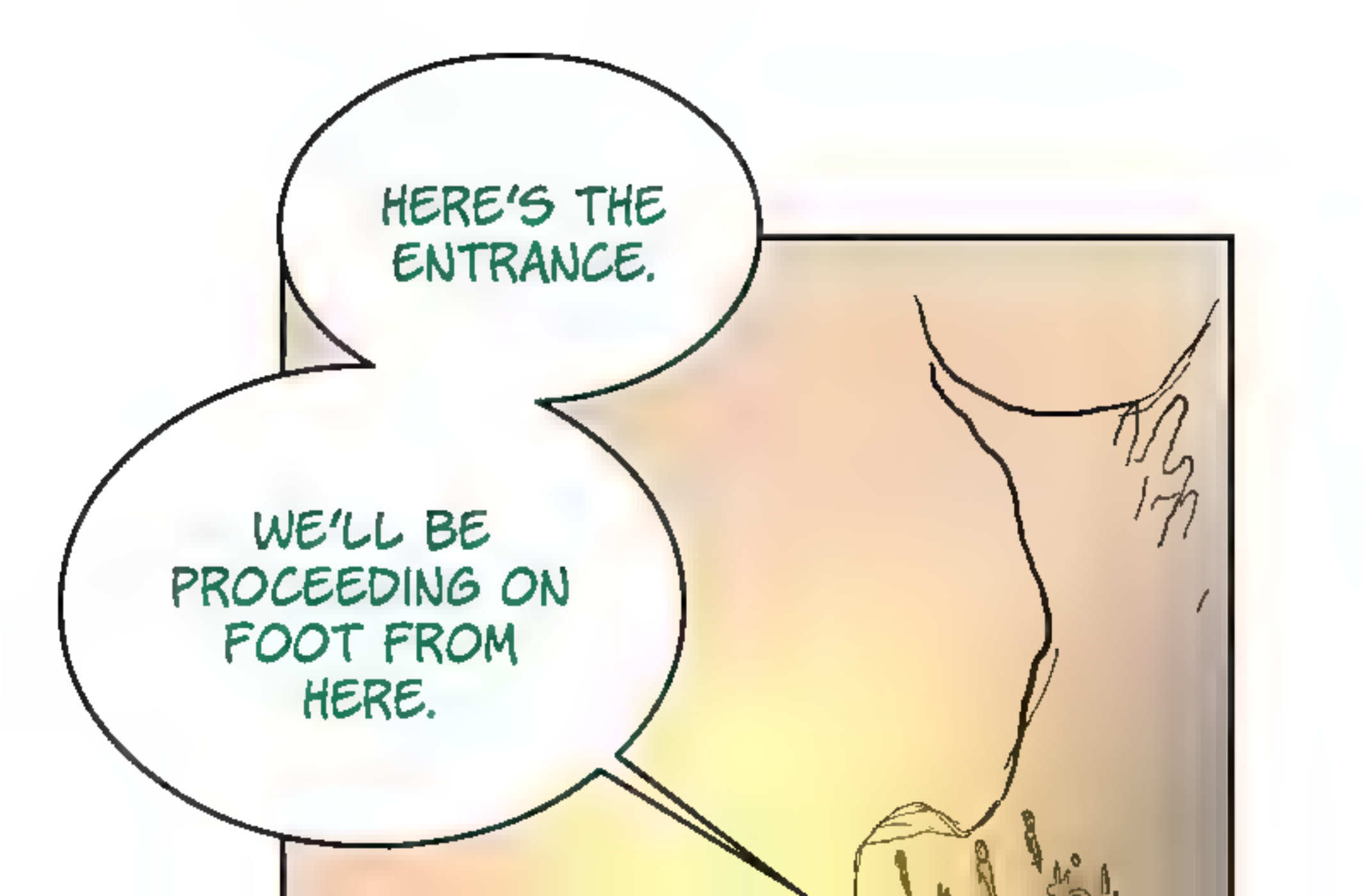
DOUBT IS A HARD THING TO REMOVE FROM PEOPLE'S MINDS ONCE IT SETS IN.

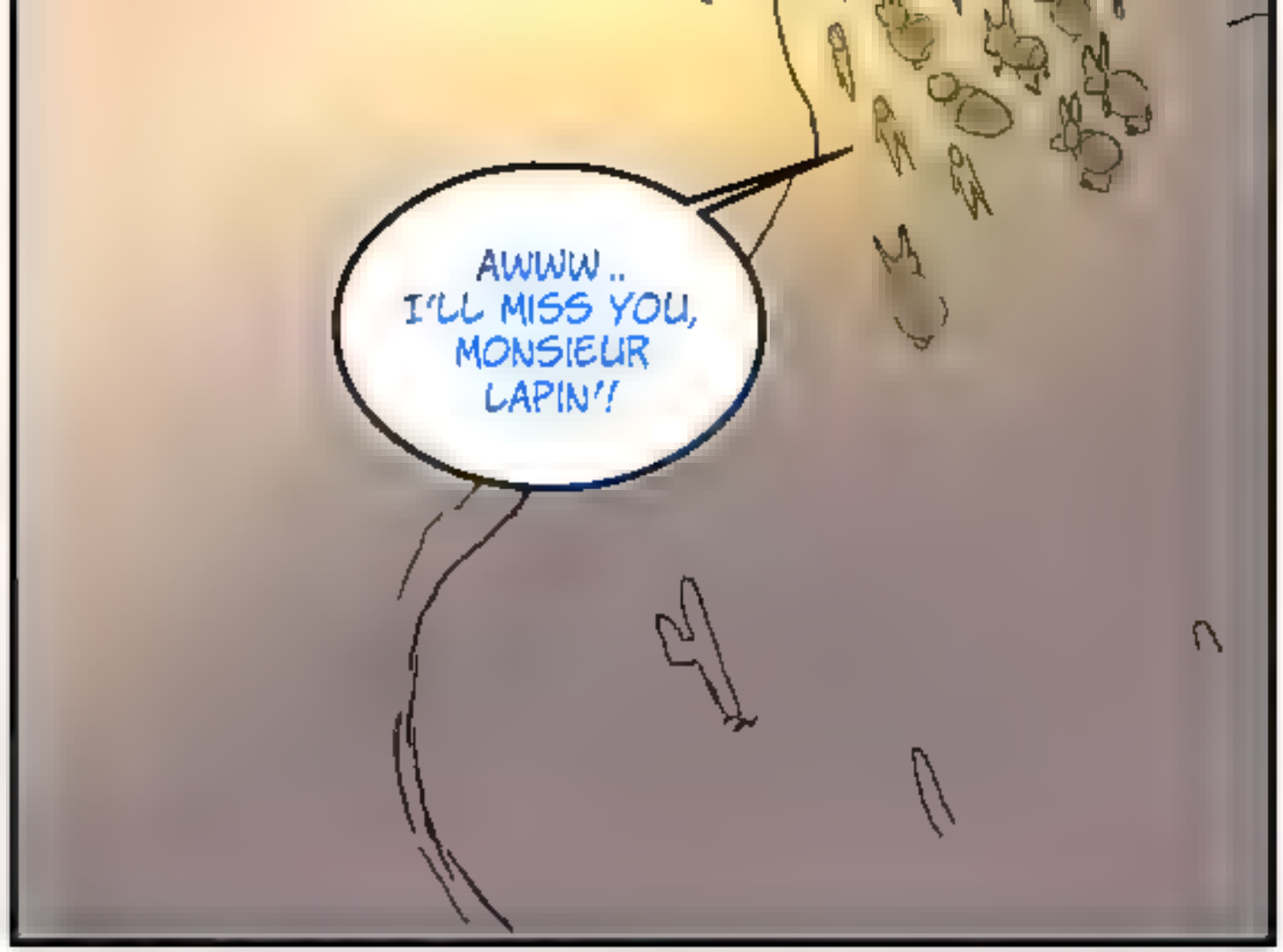
WAS THAT A THREAT JUST NOW...?

ALL THE MORE REASON TO EXPOSE HIM NOW BEFORE THIS GOES ANY FURTHER.


DON'S ABILITY TO REWRITE THE DETAILS OF THE DAY MADE HIM DIFFICULT TO CORNER. SO MY STRATEGY WAS TO HAVE HIM USE UP HIS MANA DEALING WITH THE BOULDERS. THEN HE'D BE ALMOST OUT OF POWER BY THE TIME WE REACHED THE BOSS.


I'D WAIT FOR THE FIRST SIGN OF A BLOODY NOSE AND, DURING THAT NARROW WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY BEFORE HE REPLENISHED HIS MANA, I WOULD UNMASK HIM...

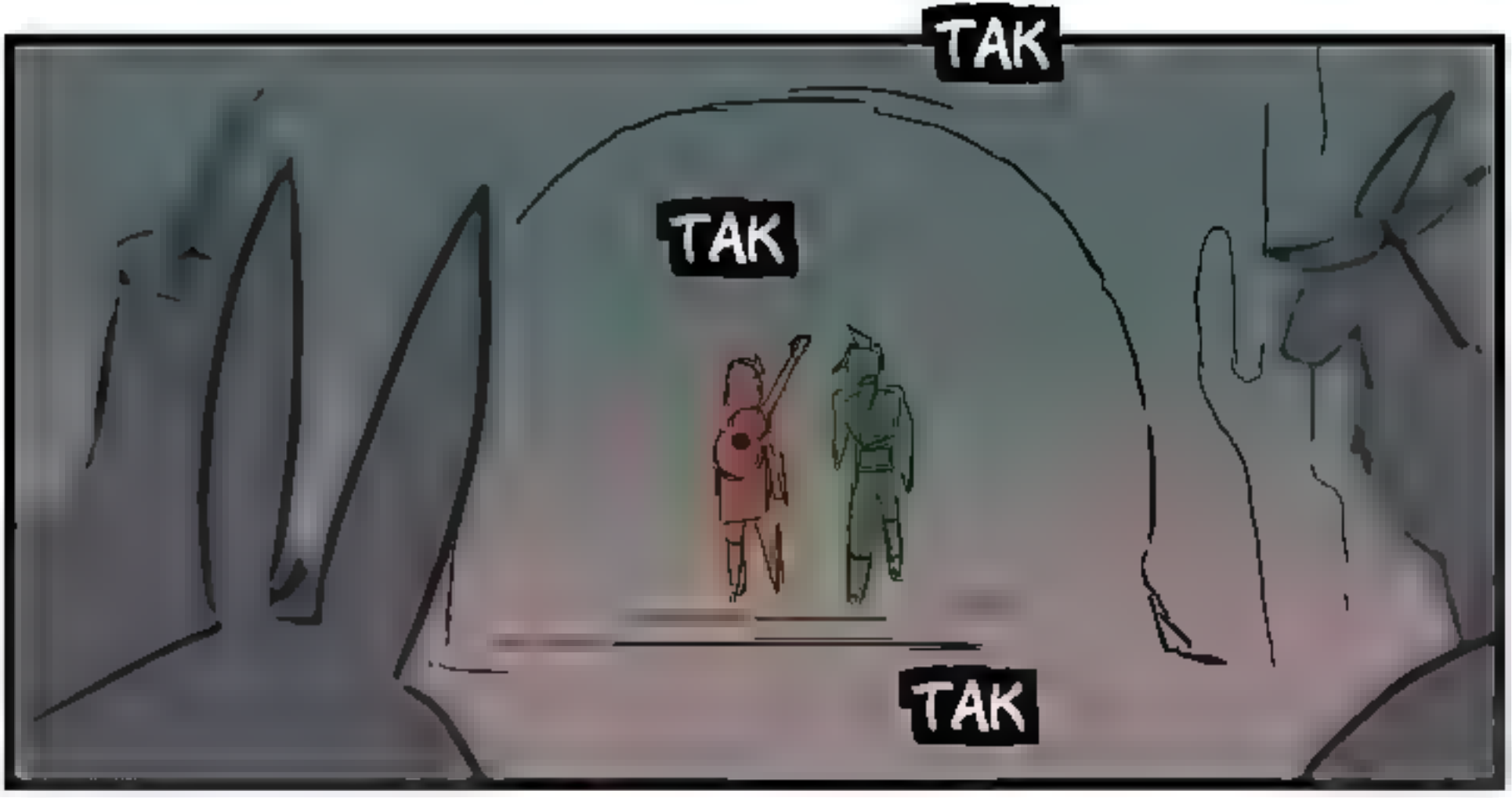

HERE'S THE ENTRANCE.
WE'LL BE PROCEEDING ON FOOT FROM HERE.


AWWW..
I'LL MISS YOU,
MONSIEUR
LAPIN!!

THIS PASSAGE COMES OUT RIGHT UNDER THE BOSS' DEN.
MOVE QUIETLY AND WE'LL HAVE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE.

LEAD THE WAY, AMIGO!

BACK TO THE NICE GUY ROUTINE ALREADY?



TAK

WAS I
IMAGINING THINGS
EARLIER?

ROAR!
IT'S THE BOSS!
DAMN!
IT SOUNDED CLOSE!

TAK
TAK
TAK
TAK
QUICK, GET INTO POSITION--

THIS WAS IT... AS SOON AS DON WAS DISTRACTED BY THE FIGHT, I WAS GOING TO GIVE EVERYONE ELSE NEW ORDERS TO FALL BACK TO A NEARBY PASSAGEWAY THAT SCOUT FOUND. THEY'D BE SAFELY OUT OF SIGHT, BUT STILL IN EARSHOT, AND THAT'S WHEN I WOULD CONFRONT DON...

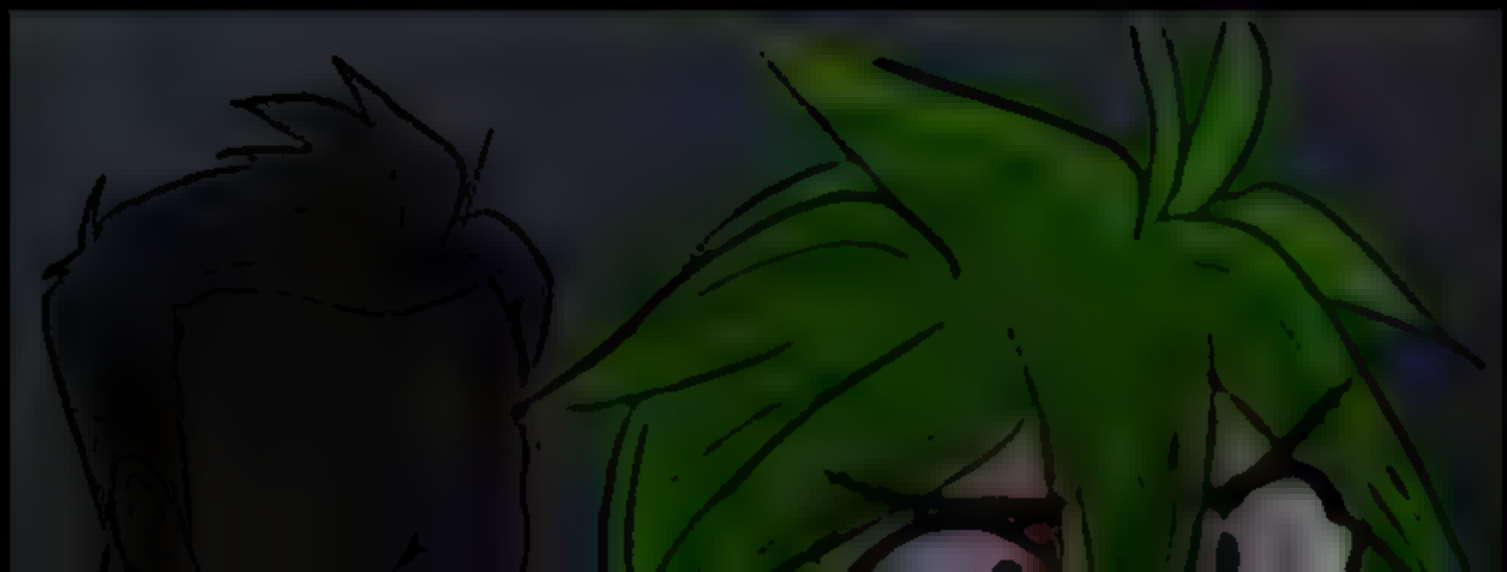
CRUMBLE
CRASH

THE CEILING COLLAPSED!!

TAK

TAK

TAK



THAT'S UNFORTUNATE...

ONE OF THE ROCKS THAT WAS HOLDING UP THE WALLS MUST HAVE BEEN CRACKED.

DON!!

WHY
ARE YOU--

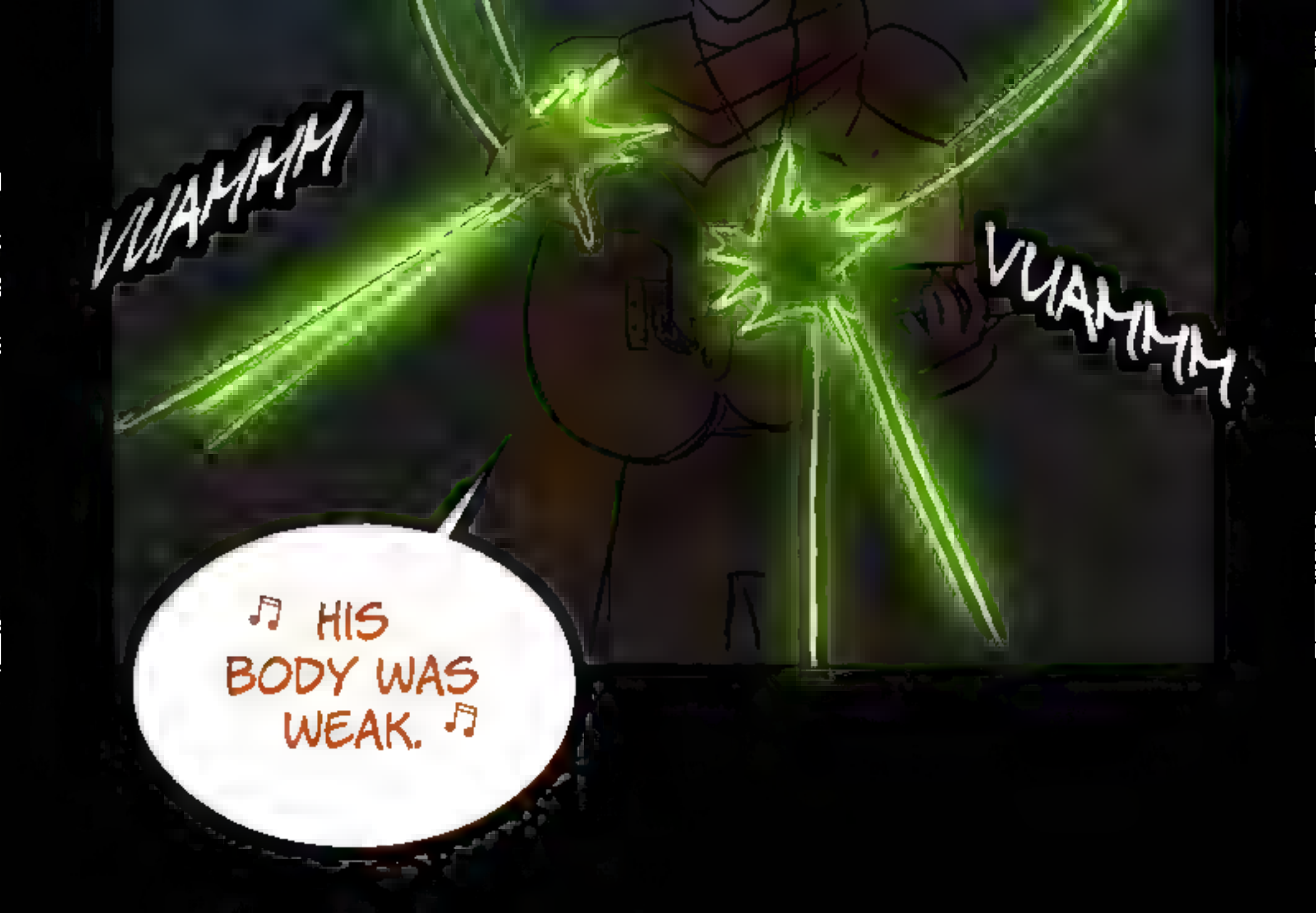
SHH... I
HAVE A STORY
TO TELL YOU:

♫ THERE ONCE WAS A BOY LED ASTRAY...
BY THE VOICES IN HIS HEAD... ♫

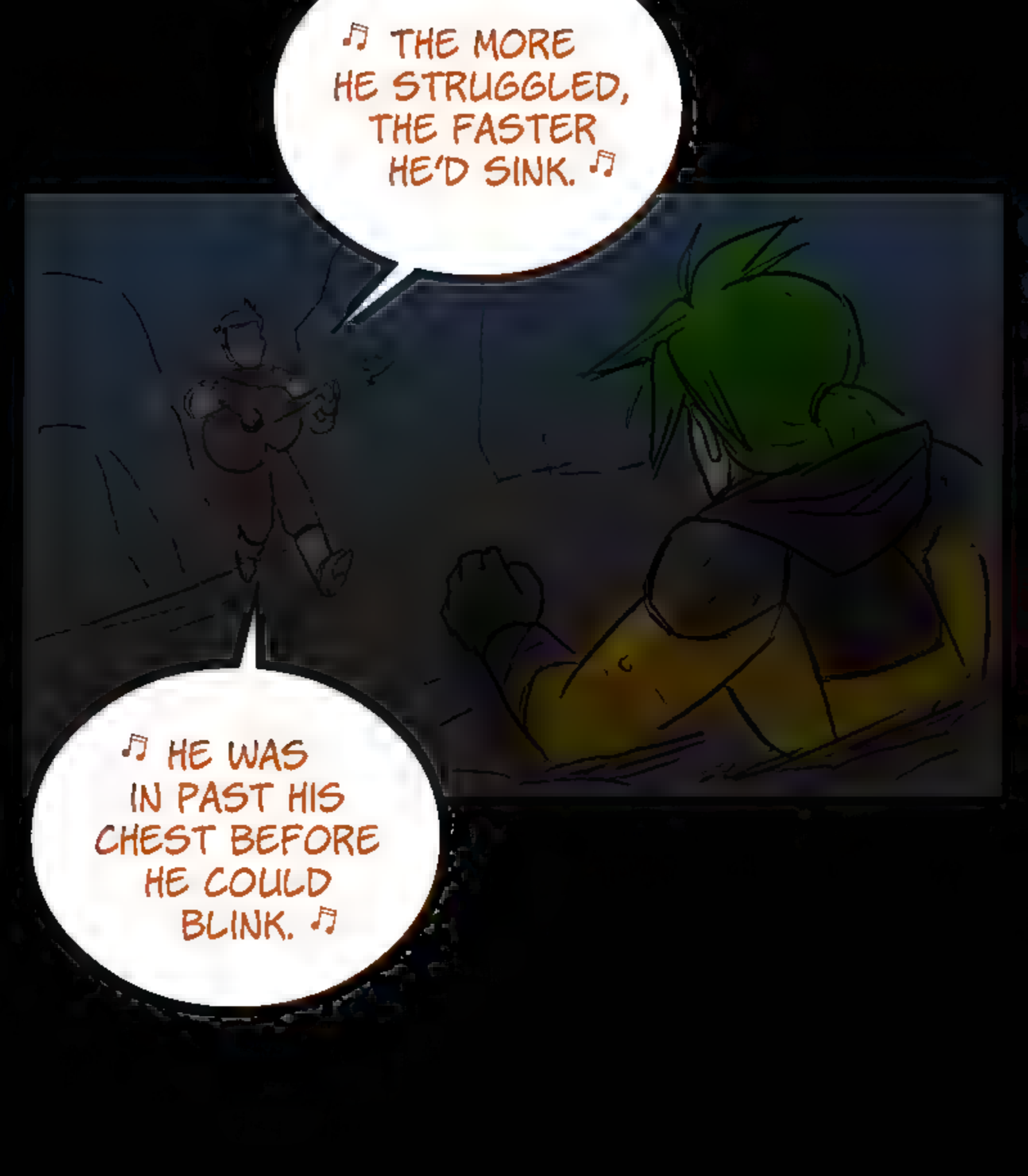
♫ HE TURNED AGAINST HIS FRIENDS...
AAAAAHH!!!
AND LEFT THEM ALL FOR DEAD. ♫

STOP!!
OZZZZZ

♫ BUT HIS AIM WAS OFF. ♫

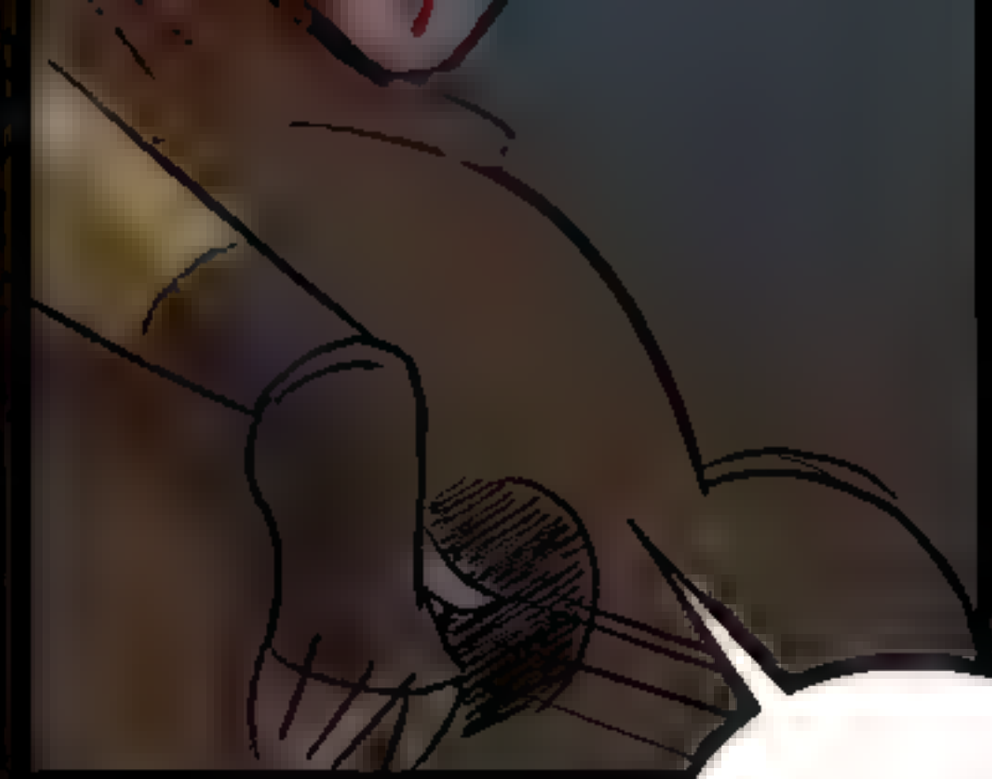

VUAMMM
VUAMMM
♫ HIS BODY WAS WEAK. ♫

♫ THEN HE FELT THE QUICKSAND BENEATH HIS FEET. ♫


♫ THE MORE HE STRUGGLED, THE FASTER HE'D SINK. ♫
♫ HE WAS IN PAST HIS CHEST BEFORE HE COULD BLINK. ♫

DON.
DON'T DO
THIS.

♫ HE BEGGED IN VAIN TO THE FRIEND HE'D DEFIED. ♫
♫ HE TOOK ONE LAST BREATH...



AND THEN... ♫

DAMN IT... IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THIS!

♫ HE...
DIED. ♫

DISAPPEAR

DON.

YOU'VE
BEEN KEEPING
YOUR TRUE COLORS
A SECRET...

I'VE BEEN KEEPING ONE TOO.

YOU
WON'T GET RID
OF ME SO EASILY
THIS TIME.

MISSISSIPPI

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AND PLEASE RATE ★ US IF YOU HAVEN'T!